

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

*A History of British Sessile-eyed Crustacea.* By C. SPENCE BATE, F.R.S., F.L.S. &c., and J. O. WESTWOOD, M.A., F.L.S. Parts I.—XI. 8vo. London: Van Voorst, 1861–1863.

IN a former Number of this Journal (January 1862) we called the attention of our readers to the appearance of the first numbers of this important work, and we have now to notice the completion of its first volume with the eleventh number just published. This volume contains the descriptions of nearly all the British Amphipoda—only the Hyperine forms and the Læmodipoda of Latreille (which are included by Mr. Spence Bate among the Amphipoda) being left for the second volume.

Being usually of small size, and destitute of that variety of form which renders the Stalk-eyed Crustacea so interesting even to the unscientific, the animals treated of in this volume would seem perhaps to possess few attractions, except for the zealous student of nature; but this is far from being the case; for, notwithstanding a general uniformity of structure, the different genera exhibit many curious peculiarities in the various development of their parts; and this will apply still more strongly to numerous forms of Amphipoda and Isopoda which still remain to be described. The importance of these creatures in the economy of nature is also very great: making up for the smallness of their size by the immense numbers in which they exist and the ubiquity of their presence, they are ready at the first moment to seize upon the dead animal matter which constitutes their ordinary food, and thus to act their part as scavengers of the ocean without the least delay, whilst in their turn they furnish an abundance of excellent nourishment to fishes and other aquatic animals, some of which thrive better upon this Crustacean diet than upon any other. Many of the species also (*Podoceridæ*) are predaceous in their habits; and most of these form dwellings for themselves, the construction of which presents many singularities. Among the forms still to be described, we have both terrestrial and aquatic, herbivorous, carnivorous, and even parasitic species; so that, whatever might be our opinion at the first glance, we soon discover that the Sessile-eyed Crustacea really present a greater variety of interest both in structure and habit than the more striking Podophthalmous forms.

Under any circumstances, the Edriophthalma form a group which the student of our marine zoology must not neglect; and he may congratulate himself on the excellent guide through the intricacies of a somewhat difficult branch of natural history which is afforded him by the joint work of Messrs. Spence Bate and Westwood. If we had much pleasure in speaking in high terms of the first few numbers, it is an equal gratification to be able to say, now that it has advanced halfway on its course, that the excellent character of the work has been maintained throughout, and that, notwithstanding the limited public upon which such books depend for their support,

both the authors and the publisher have used every effort to render their 'History of British Sessile-eyed Crustacea' as perfect as possible. It is a work to which we most heartily wish success, and which we can warmly recommend to the notice of our readers.

*The Tropical World: a Popular Scientific Account of the Natural History of the Animal and Vegetable Kingdoms in the Equatorial Regions.* By Dr. G. HARTWIG. With eight Chromoxylographic Plates and numerous Woodcuts. 8vo. London, Longmans, 1863.

ONE of our ancient Universities is adorned by the presence of an academic dignitary, of whom it has been somewhat irreverently said that, while science is his forte, omniscience is his foible. It seems to us that Dr. Hartwig's talents entitle him to a remark exactly the converse. Notwithstanding the expectation held out to us by his title-page, we have been entirely at a loss to discover the "scientific" element in his work. It is completely swamped by the "popular" treatment. Moreover we do not see the advantage of culling, from authors who have, in the best sense of the word, achieved "popularity," passages which are as generally known to Englishmen as the way from Hyde-Park Corner to the Mansion House. Nor, in stringing together these extracts, does the compiler anywhere exhibit the skill or art of the magician who, with one wave of his wand, re-animates dry bones and calls up ideas that might otherwise remain dormant even in the minds of the imaginative. Sir Emerson Tennant has had his thousands of readers, and Dr. Livingstone his tens of thousands. What, then, but the very demon of book-making has prompted the Heidelberg doctor to publish this exceedingly useless work? We indeed admire his knowledge of our difficult idiom, which he writes with scarcely a mistake, and generally with a purity to which many of our countrymen are strangers; but (and we say it advisedly) his language never rises with his theme above the very commonest of common-place expression. One chapter of the descriptive portion of 'Tom Cringle's Log' will give a person who has never left the temperate zone a better notion of many physical aspects of the tropical world than a perusal of the whole of this big octavo.

Thus we fully endorse the strictures that were passed upon Dr. Hartwig's former volume in these pages\*. The two books are, *mutatis mutandis*, as like one another as two peas. We have the same abundant poverty of illustrations—woodcuts not better than those which deface many a penny broad sheet, and, worse than these, the marvellous tricoloured engravings dignified by the euphonious designation of "chromoxylographic plates." It is well, however, to be thankful for small mercies: 'The Sea and its Living Wonders' was embellished by a dozen of these monstrous productions; in the 'Tropical World' the number is diminished by one-third. We have been puzzling ourselves to no purpose by trying to account for the insertion, among so much rubbish, of the figure of the Mongoose

\* Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist., January 1861, pp. 63-67.